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## OFFICE-SEEKING DURING WASHINGTON'S ADMINISTRATION

WHEN Washington became President under the Constitution, he was without any precedent which he could use with advantage in selecting men for public office. In England and France, the two countries with whose governments he was most familiar, offices were obtained by court favor or by family influence. Their practices were examples to be shunned rather than followed. In this country there had been no system, but there had been a general desire to have meritorious government officials, if meritorious men could be induced to serve. In the states all but the highest officers were named by the governors or elected by the legislatures, and the federal officials were chosen by Congress. But with the adoption of the Constitution there was a great change. Many state offices became federal offices, and the early congresses created a large number of new places, which the change of government rendered necessary. The fountain head of all appointing power was the President. The advice and consent of the Senate were to be invoked only after he had made the nomination. He was to create no offices, but he was to fill all the offices. Washington, as the executive head of a new government, was confronted with a task of extraordinary magnitude, and not the least of its difficulties was involved in the question of appointments to office. Before his inauguration, even before the requisite number of states had ratified the Constitution, letters from army officers and civilians, asking for appointments under the new government, began pouring in upon him. It was no more possible for him than it has been possible for his successors to make all of the appointments from his personal knowledge of suitable men. He sought out a few for the higher positions, and in a more limited proportion for the lesser offices, but the bulk of the offices he filled by selections from among those who applied for them. It may be presumed that some of the applications were never reduced to writing, and that some never became a part of the President's official papers, but so many are preserved among the government archives that it is safe to say they include a considerable majority of all the applications made. They were sent to the Department

of State, which at that time, more than any other executive department, was regarded as the President's office. There are none covering this period among the archives of the other departments. Many of the papers are indorsed in Washington's own hand, and it is probable that few of them were not examined by him. A few requests for domestic offices were addressed in the first instance to the Secretaries of State, of the Treasury, and of War, and nearly all applications for foreign appointments were sent directly to the Secretary of State. A few others were sent to senators and representatives, by whom they were referred to the President, but most of the applications were sent to the President in the first place. In the beginning some were addressed to the President and the Senate jointly, the applicants doubtless supposing that, under the Constitution, the Senate shared the appointing power with the President. These were all referred to the Senate by Washington.<sup>1</sup>

Within certain limitations the applications show what were the reasons upon which he based his selections for office, but they do not in all cases show all the reasons. Verbal inquiries made by the President or at his instance, verbal representations made to him, and the extent of his own knowledge of the applicants were often determining factors in the appointments and seldom appear of record. An instance of this is the case of Benjamin Fishbourn, nominated to be naval officer of the port of Savannah. The Senate having rejected him, probably on grounds involving political or personal opposition, Washington nominated Lachlan McIntosh, observing in his message of August 7, 1789, that he presumed the reasons for the Senate's action were sufficient, but adding: "Permit me to submit to your consideration whether, on occasions where the propriety of nominations appear questionable to you, it would not be expedient to communicate that circumstance to me, and thereby avail yourselves of the information which led me to make them, and which I would with pleasure lay before you." He gives his reasons for having nominated Fishbourn, who served under his eye in the war and whose conduct was "irreproachable." He behaved gallantly at the storming of Stony Point. Since his residence in Georgia he had been a member of the Assembly, of the Executive Council, a lieutenant-colonel of militia, and was appointed by the Council to an office similar to the one for which the President nominated him. The President says that he received private letters recommending him, but they were secondary considerations. He concludes: "It ap-

<sup>1</sup> *Executive Journal of the Senate*, I. 9.

peared, therefore, to me that Mr. Fishbourn must have enjoyed the *confidence* of the militia officers, in order to have been elected to a military rank; the *confidence* of the freemen, to have been elected to the Assembly; the *confidence* of the Assembly, to have been selected for the Council; and the *confidence* of the Council, to have been appointed collector of the port of Savannah.”<sup>1</sup>

Turning to the papers in the case, it appears that Fishbourn wrote to Washington as early as May 12, informing him of the appointment he had received from the state government, and on May 17 he wrote again stating his expectation of receiving a presidential appointment, and lamenting, at the same time, that General Wayne had not been chosen to represent Georgia in the Senate.

Here it will be noticed that the operating causes of Fishbourn's nomination — Washington's personal knowledge of the applicant and his services and private recommendations received in his behalf — do not form a part of the official record.

Nevertheless, some of the papers are so full as to be convincing proof of the reasons for the appointments, and others furnish a fair basis from which the reasons may be inferred.<sup>2</sup> We will take up the papers of several of the successful applicants.

Jabez G. Fitch was appointed, June 9, 1794, marshal of the Vermont district upon the recommendation of Samuel Hitchcock and Israel Smith. Hitchcock writes that the marshal “should reside near Champlain, as the principal business of the district court originates there.” Fitch lives at Vergennes, and has served for some time as deputy marshal. He would discharge the duties of marshal with fidelity and dignity. Smith writes that Fitch is about thirty years of age, “has had a polite education,” is of good

<sup>1</sup> *Executive Journal of the Senate*, I. 16.

<sup>2</sup> During the eight years of his administration Washington appointed of revenue officers, including collectors, surveyors, commanders of revenue cutters, inspectors, naval officers and supervisors, one hundred and twenty-five; of commissioners of loans, eighteen; fifteen diplomatic officers; sixty-one consular officers; eight territorial judges; twenty-nine judges of the district courts; three comptrollers of the Treasury; thirty-six United States attorneys; forty-one United States marshals; four members of the legislative councils of the territories; three purveyors of public supplies; seven commissioners to treat with the Indian tribes; nine surveyors of the federal district; four commissioners to settle the accounts between the states and the United States; ten officers of the mint at Philadelphia; a superintendent of the opening of the national road; a paymaster of the troops; a register of the Treasury; five commissioners to open subscriptions to the United States Bank; a commissioner of internal revenue; a surveyor-general; a governor of the Northwest Territory; two auditors of the Treasury; and six miscellaneous officers, making in all three hundred and fifty-one civil officers, not including judges of the Supreme Court, heads of departments, and a number of small offices. *Department of State, MS. Archives.*

moral character, and the fact that he is now deputy marshal is particularly in his favor. He repeats Hitchcock's statements about the desirability of his residence, and adds that the district judge and supervisors have asked him to write in Fitch's behalf.

Matthew Clarkson was appointed marshal of New York August 5, 1791. He writes from Philadelphia, January 2, 1790, recalling the fact that he acted under Washington's immediate command, "as a principal in the department of auditor of accounts to the army," and was personally known to Washington. He desires to be made a commissioner "for the locating and establishing" of a permanent residence for Congress. He concludes: "Convinced that the nomination or appointment to offices which you are pleased to make, have suitable qualifications, personal merit, and former services for their objects, uninfluenced by the solicitations of friends,—I cheerfully rest my application upon that issue as the most honorable." Later he recalls his application to the President's attention, soliciting the office of auditor of accounts in the Treasury Department.

John Stokes was appointed judge of the district court of North Carolina August 3, 1790. Just before his appointment (July 31, 1790), John Steele, a representative from North Carolina, writes: "I am authorized to say that Colonel Stokes will serve as judge for the district of North Carolina, if appointed. In a conversation on the subject with himself he expressed a wish that Colonel Davie<sup>1</sup> might hold that office in preference to any other man; but on condition that he declined offering or refused to accept, he was not unwilling to be mentioned as a candidate." He adds that Stokes has served as a state judge and would give general satisfaction.

North Carolina had at first rejected the Constitution, and there is evidence that Washington exercised great care in the selection of officers who were to serve in that state. The following memorandum is in Jefferson's handwriting:—

INDORSED "FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE, JUNE 7<sup>th</sup>, 1790."

North Carolina

District judge. Col<sup>o</sup> Davie is recommended by Steele.

Hawkins sais he is their first law character.

Brown sais the same.

Samuel Spencer.

Steele sais he is a good man, one of the present judges, not remarkable for his abilities, but deserves well of his country.

<sup>1</sup> William R. Davie was appointed to the same position June 8, 1791.

Bloodworth sais Spencer desires the appointment, but sais nothing of him.

John Stokes.

Steele names him at his own request. he is a Virginian, was a Capt<sup>n</sup> in the late war, lost his right hand in Beaufort's defeat. practises law in S. Carolina with reputation and success ; has been frequently of the legislature, was a member of the convention, a federalist,<sup>1</sup> is now a Col<sup>o</sup> of Militia cavalry and additional judge of the Supreme Court.

Hawkins has understood he is a worthy man.

Ashe names him.

District Attorney.

Hamilton. named by Bloodworth.

Hawkins sais he is now under indictment and will be silenced.

Hay. named by Bloodworth.

Hawkins sais he is an Irishman who came over about the close of the war to see after some confiscated property. he has married in the country.

Arnet. named by Bloodworth.

Hawkins sais he is a N. Jerseyman of good character.

Sitgreaves.

Hawkins sais he lives in Newbern where the courts are held. he is a gentlemanly man, and as good a lawyer as any there.

Ashe sais that Sitgreaves is not so brilliant in abilities, but of great rectitude of mind.

Bloodworth sais that Sitgreaves is a gentleman of character & represented the state in Congress in 1785.<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

The appointments in Rhode Island were made largely upon a political basis. Several of the papers will be quoted further on in this paper.

Where exceptional circumstances seemed to require it, Washington considered the politics of those whom he appointed to office. "I shall not," he wrote to Timothy Pickering, September 27, 1795, "whilst I have the honor to administer the government, bring a man into any office of consequence knowingly whose political tenets are adverse to the measures which the general government are pursuing ; for this, in my opinion, would be a sort of

<sup>1</sup> In explanation of Jefferson's statement that Stokes was a Federalist, it can only be said that at that time Jefferson's anti-federal sentiments were not fully declared, and furthermore that he was setting forth claims to appointment which would influence his chief.

<sup>2</sup> On the same date as the memorandum, Washington sent the following North Carolina nominations to the Senate: William R. Davie, to be judge ; John Sitgreaves, to be attorney; John Skinner, to be marshal. *Executive Journal of the Senate*, I. 50.

political suicide.”<sup>1</sup> This statement was used with reference to the appointment of an attorney-general, and can be stretched to cover only the higher offices. But in the Rhode Island appointments it would certainly have been suicidal if the enemies of the federal government had received recognition. The state had given in its adhesion to the Union at a late date and by a slender majority, and the “antis” could not safely be given any opportunity of undoing the work which the Federalists had accomplished with so much difficulty. The case was entirely exceptional. The true basis of Washington’s appointments was correctly stated in Matthew Clarkson’s application, as “suitable qualifications, personal merit, and former services.”

Taking up the applications without especial reference to their successful issue, it may be said that they show what were regarded by the people at large as valid claims to office. They come from no particular class, and range from letters written by men of scholarship and education to those emanating from the most illiterate. They are distributed with impartiality over the whole of the thirteen states. They group themselves into five distinct heads.

I. Those based wholly upon the fitness of the candidate to perform the duties of the office. This group is so much larger than any other that it may be said to comprise fully three-fourths of the whole. The following example is from General Benjamin Lincoln, advocating the appointment of John Lowell as a judge of the Supreme Court. It was unsuccessful so far as that office was concerned, but Lowell was soon afterwards appointed a United States district judge.

BOSTON, July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1789.

I consider, my dear General, that not only the happiness of the people under the new government but that the very existence of it depends, in a great measure upon the capacity and ability of those who may be employed in the judiciary and executive branches of government. Under this government I hope yet to live and to leave in its arms a large and extensive family. I cannot therefore be an inattentive spectator while the important business of organization is before your Excellency nor be silent when there is but a possibility of my doing the least good. As your Excellency cannot be personally acquainted with all who ought to come forward and aid in the administration but must rely, in some degree, on the information of gentlemen in the different States for the character of those who may be commissioned to fill the several departments which may be erected in perfecting the general system I therefore beg leave to mention to your

<sup>1</sup> Washington’s *Writings*, ed. Ford, XII. 107.

Excellency that the common voice of the people here points out Mr Lowell as a gentleman well qualified to fill one of the seats upon the bench of the supream court. — The purity of his mind, the strength and promptitude of his judgment, and his knowledge of the law united with his having held a similar office under the old confederation have directed their views to this gentleman —

I am very apprehensive that he has not by any way communicated his wishes to your Excellency. If he has not the omission may originate in the extreem delicacy of the measure. It is an office which to fill with honour and dignity requires an honest heart, a clear head, and a perfect knowledge of law in its extensive relations the truth of which he so fully realises that he is restrained from making a tender of his services as it would evince his belief that he enjoys the great and necessary qualifications to fill the office — To this a gentleman of Mr Lowell's nice feelings would be brought with great reluctance

I hope the above hints will be acceptable — If they do good my intentions will be perfectly answered — If they do not my apology for making them is the rectitude of my intentions —

I have the honour of being  
with the highest esteem

My dear General your Excellency's  
most obedient and humble

HIS EXCELLENCY  
THE PRESIDENT OF THE  
UNITED STATES.

servant B. LINCOLN.

II. Those in which the applicant's military service plays the most important part. This group is a large one; but, while a military record is adduced incidentally in many of the applications, it is put forward as the sole claim for office in very few cases. The following letter from Richard Peters, of Pennsylvania, was written in behalf of General Anthony Wayne: —

BELMONT, August 2, 1790.

*Sir*

Averse as I am from a Desire to trouble you on such Subjects my Anxiety on Account of the Situation in which a worthy Character is unfortunately placed has induced me to take the Liberty of mentioning to you the unhappy Predicament in which General Wayne stands — As Matters have turned out he was cursed with a Present from the State of Georgia of a Rice Plantation which they gave him with very laudable Intentions. Before he began to improve this Property he was possessed of a handsome Fortune which from a too eager Desire to encrease it he has totally destroyed. Yet he has been a most industrious Slave to the Pursuit and cannot be accused of anything unworthy his Character. He relied upon the opinions of enthusiastic People on his first undertaking the Business and before he had gained Sufficient Experience he was



irreparably ruined. I believe however he will have enough to satisfy the Demands against him but I am confident he will have Nothing left either of his patrimonial Estate or the pecuniary Rewards for his military Services. In short he will be in Want.

I have seen a Plan of a federal Land office. The Place of all others I think him most capable of executing is that of Surveyor General. I know he is an excellent Draftsman and has a Genius for this Business in which he has been practically employed. Should you Sir think proper to give him that Appointment I am convinced he will do Justice to your Choice. But if in your better Judgment you have any other in View I shall be happy in the Endeavor to serve a worthy Man whose Situation I most sincerely lament. I have not been solicited by him to give you this Trouble and hope the Goodness of my Intentions will induce you to Excuse the Liberty I have taken.

I have the Honour to be  
with the most respectful Esteem  
Your most obed Serv<sup>t</sup>

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

RICHARD PETERS.

III. Those in which the applicant requests continuance in an office which he held under the former government. This group is a large one, and the applications were often successful.<sup>1</sup>

CHARLESTON, S<sup>c</sup> CAROLINA, 31<sup>st</sup> March, 1789—

Although it may appear a degree of presumption in me to address your Excellency, yet were I to neglect it, it might be deemed a fault, the occasion I trust will plead my excuse — The enclosed Letters will explain the motive, which I hope backed by the opinion of The Senators from this State, will have some weight in continuing me in the Office of Collector for this Port under the new Government, which Office I have held for the State since the Revolution — should any other Candidates of superior abilities offer for the Office, I must rest satisfied, and rejoice that such are to be found, but should your Excellency and the Senate think me sufficiently qualified my unremitted attention shall be used in the faithful discharge of it.

With the greatest respect and wishes for your Excellencys health, I take the Liberty to subscribe myself —

Your Excellencys  
Most Obedient and  
Most humble servant  
GEO: ABBOTT HALL.

<sup>1</sup> "Conversing on the subject of these appointments [revenue] lately with the P., I mentioned two principles which I had the pleasure to hear him approve of. The first that state officers in similar lines who had behaved well deserved preference in the service of the United States; and 2<sup>dly</sup>, that having discharged these duties undivided, now that they become divided, the same officers were entitled to the best." — RICHARD HENRY LEE to —, June 7, 1789, *Washington's Writings*, ed. Ford, XI. 394.

IV. Those which appeal to benevolent considerations. The large number of applications which fall under this head are evidence of the prevailing belief in Washington's charitable disposition, and the papers in one case, that of John F. Sonnet, of Philadelphia, show that the President answered the appeal, not by an appointment to office, but by an "affectionate letter," accompanied by "seasonable relief." The following letter is from a lady, who begs for a clerkship for her son :—

*Sir :*

Permit me among the multitude who rejoice at your appointment, to congratulate you, as president of the United States of America, and to assure your Excellency that I enjoy an heart felt satisfaction at any event tending to promote your happiness or exaltation. May I hope you have some recollection of one who had the honor of being known to you some years back at Paramus New Jersey? I have indeed no claim to your particular attention—but presume on your distinguished humanity, and benevolence to distress. The late American war has in its consequence proved ruinous to my family, darkened my prospects of providing for my fatherless Children, and marked me the Child of misfortune! My second son Charles aged twenty one years, a youth of spirit, sobriety and honesty, writes a legible hand, and good accountant, qualified for a Clerk in an office—or in the military line being acquainted with Tacticks, I am destitute of the requisite to push him forward in life and humbly request that in the arraignment of appointments your Excellency would cast a thought on him, which would relieve my anxious breast, and confer a lasting obligation on a Lad of good morals and Character who looks up to you. I should be at a loss how to apologize for my addressing you on this occasion—were I not convinced of your great sensibility and inclination to do good. for this purpose may your valuable life be long preserved, and the choicest gifts of heaven be your reward.

Prays your Excellency's petitioner and

Most Obedient respectful

Humble servant

LYDIA WATKINS.

NEW YORK May 5<sup>th</sup> 1789. Broad Way N<sup>o</sup> 10

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

V. Those in which political considerations are an important feature. Jefferson, as we have seen, described John Stokes, of North Carolina, as a Federalist. In the application of Joseph Woodward, of Massachusetts, two of his endorsers state that he is a friend of the Constitution and a Federalist, and there are a few more instances where similar statements appear. Beyond this the subject plays no part, so far as the applications show, except in

the case of the applications from Rhode Island, and here it plays a very important part. The contest for the offices began before the state had accepted the Constitution. The following letter was written five days before that event by John Collins, governor from 1786 to 1789, and afterwards a member of Congress :—

NEWPORT, May 24<sup>th</sup> 1790.

*Sir :*

In all the vicissitudes of time, and changes of sentiments that have taken place in the United States, I have uniformly believed that the most essential happiness of our country, ultimately depended, upon the establishment of an efficient executive power, under one federal head; being the only means, to obtain that tone to government necessary, to answer the ends of its situation; the securing the general peace, promoting the general interests, — establishing the National character and rendering the Union indissolubly permanent—A power to control the selfish interests of a Single State, and to compel the sacrifice of partial views to promote the common weal.

A government thus calculated to cultivate the principles of universal Justice, probity and honour, must be the source of national strength, as well as happiness to mankind—However I have been uniformly Actuated by these principles, the ill directed zeal of the majority of the people of this state counteracting these principles, and my consciousness of possessing the general confidence, hath hitherto led me to a degree of caution in my conduct and open declaration on the score of political concerns; expecting to effect more from my moderation and influence in public character, than by a conduct more explicit and pointed; which is fully evinced by what has taken place in consequence of my act in the appointment of a convention to adopt the constitution; which depended solely on me; and such was the caprice of the people, that all public confidence was withdrawn from me, and was deprived of every public trust and emolument. — This was a voluntary sacrifice, the event being well known, and comparatively a small one when Just anticipations pourtray to me the great, the general advantages arising from a Completion of the union of the States (for have no doubt of the adoption) but altho personal sacrifices for the general good have been long familiar to me, (and if you have any knowledge of my property or character you must be conscious they have been many and weighty) they are more easily supported by the hope of compensation — and when I reflect upon your friendship, generosity and goodness, with how much it will be in your power to gratifie me, you will give me leave to anticipate your influence and appointment to the office of collector for the district of Newport—your Excellency's attention to me in this shall be ever had in lasting remembrance.

Your goodness will forgive the trouble given you, by an application

from him, who will obey your commands with chearfulness and alacrity  
—and honour you without flattery Am —

With every Sentiment of respect  
and Esteem

Your Humble Servt.

JOHN COLLINS.

The temper of the people of the state is well illustrated by the following :—

PROVIDENCE, June 11<sup>th</sup>, 1790.

D<sup>r</sup> S<sup>r</sup>:

We are happy in the Late Event of this States becoming one of the Union, tho at this late Hour, Had the people been so Fortunate as to have known their True Interest no one State would have adopted the New Constitution Sooner than this.

Grait Exertions have been made and Very Large Sacrifises of Property by the Federals of this Place to change the Pollicy of this Government which for this Four Years Last past have been constantly opposing the adoption of the new constitution and of course have done very Grait Injustice with their paper money, and we sincearly Hope that none of those carrectors may be promoted to Aney office by Congress, Maney things we Doubt not has beene and will be said by Letter or otherwise frome the Principle carrectors among the Anties, theirby if Possable to Induce a beleave in the President, that some of their Friends are Intituled to Promotion, but we Hope such Deception will not have its Desired Influence, as we now assure you that every member of the convention who was in the Least under the Influence of the Anties of this Town, Voted and used all their Influence against the adoption, and a negative Vote would have passed had it not beene for the *Very Grait* Exurtions of the Fedderals in Gaining the Votes of Portsmouth and Middletown which was Quite Remote from the Influence of the Anties of this Town, We now having so brite a Prospect before us, of Justice and Equity being Substituted by, in Lue of Fraud and Injustice being promoted Under the culler of Law, we Begg Leave to take the Libberty of Recommending a core of Honest Faithfull and Vigilent Custom House Officers for this Department Such as will cause Every Copper of the Renew that shall become due by the Laws of Congress to be punctually paid to the Treasury of the United States, . . . <sup>1</sup>

We are D<sup>r</sup> S<sup>r</sup> with the Graitest  
Respect and Esteeme Your  
Most Ob<sup>t</sup> Most Humble Serv<sup>ts</sup>

JOHN BROWN.

JOHN FRANCIS.

<sup>1</sup> The omissions here and in other letters cited are not for purposes of concealment, but merely to economize space.

How carefully the administration investigated the character and antecedents of the Rhode Island candidates is shown in a letter from Henry Marchant written to Alexander Hamilton, but indorsed in Washington's hand.

NEWPORT, Dec<sup>r</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> 1793.

*Private and Confidential.*

*Dear Sir,*

By the last Post I was honored with your confidential Communication of the 20<sup>th</sup> of Nov<sup>r</sup>. — From appearances here I was fearful some embarrassment might arise on the Subject of a fit Person for District Attorney for this District. — Wishing to be as happy as possible with the Person who should be appointed; — and not knowing that my Sentiments might be expected, or to whom I might with Propriety address them, and knowing they were at all Times demandable; — upon so delicate a Subject I did not interfere my Opinion, but contented myself with informing the President thro' the Secretary of State, with the Vacancy of that Office, by the Death of Mr. Channing — . . .

With Respect to the two Gentlemen recommended, Mr. Howell and Mr. Barnes, I have not the least personal Predeliction. I conceive it my Duty to comply with your request. The Interest of the Public shall be my End, in the Freedom with which I shall venture to express my Ideas. — Upon almost any other Occasion I should not conceive myself at this Liberty. Mr. Howell I have been many years acquainted with, and ever on good Terms. — You might have had some Knowledge of Him in Congress, and consequently in some good Measure of His political Character, Temper of Mind and Abilities. — He was not then a Lawyer. — He is a Man of Learning — He was for some years very useful in a learned Society, — the College of this State. He has been a Member of the Legislature, and a Judge of the Superior Court of this State: — and then it was I believe, that He first had the Thought of studying Law with an Intention of entering into the Profession. — Upon quitting the Bench, He soon after was admitted an Att<sup>y</sup> and Counsellor at Law, and has been, for one year only I think, Att<sup>y</sup>. Gen<sup>l</sup>. of the state. There is no Doubt of his Learning and Abilities sufficient for the exercise of the Office of an Att<sup>y</sup>. of the U. S. —, nor has His Integrity, to my Knowledge, ever been questioned. — It has been frequently lamented that His political Conduct has been unsteady, and supposed to be too much lead by Motives of present applaudits; — and He has accordingly never been so happy as to retain them long in any Place or station. He does not appear to me possessed of those easy and accommodating Manners, which consistant with Integrity and Justice to our own Opinions, are essential to gain and preserve Esteem and Confidence. Sanguine and persevering at the Moment, — He yet wants Steadiness and Prudence. —

It is indeed to be regretted that this affair should assume a Party Com-  
plection. To this part of the State, I am confident Mr. Howell would

not be agreeable — Nor are they sanguine in Behalf of Mr. Barnes. — They have not I believe thought it proper to interfere. I am convinced however, they would be more happy if on enquiry, a third Character could be found competent and eligible. — Upon the Decease of Mr. Channing Our Thoughts turned upon Mr. Benj<sup>m</sup> Bourne and Mr. Ray Greene, as there was a handsome opening for two Gentlemen of the Profession. It was with Pleasure we heard, both those Gentlemen had thoughts of coming here. But Mr. Bourne may not think such an Appointment an Object sufficient to induce Him to quit Congress, or that His Duty to His Constituents would justify Him in suddenly quitting His Post. — Whether He should reside in Newport or Providence, all Parties I doubt not would be satisfied with the Appointment. — I must say again, that wherever the Judge resides it would be happy to Him and beneficial to the Public that the Atty. should reside in the same Place —

Mr. Ray Greene is the Son of William Greene Esq. of Warwick about the Center of this State. The old Gentleman very independant in His Circumstances is a thorough Whig, highly esteemed, was Governor of this State in our most arduous and trying scenes with the highest approbation. — His Father, — Grandfather to the present Gentleman had been Gov. many years past, and in like manner possessed the public Confidence. — A Relation and the closest Friendship subsisted between this Family and the late Gen<sup>l</sup> Greene. — The present Mr. Ray Greene possesses in an eminent Degree the virtues of His Father and Grandfather with the advantage of a liberal Education. . . .

With Respect and Sincire Esteem

I have the Honor to be

Sir Your most obed<sup>t</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>

HENRY MARCHANT.

SECRETARY HAMILTON.

It cannot be denied that in the applications for office under Washington's administration we find the germs from which the spoils system afterwards developed. We have seen that soldiers of the Revolution, having received little pay during the war and none at its close, conceived that the gratitude of the country for their services should take the substantial form of civil office, and that in the state where opposition to the new government had been most successful and pronounced federal patronage was extended only to the party which supported the government. It is easy to see how the idea that something besides mere fitness for office constituted a reason for appointment should have spread rapidly among the people in succeeding years. Unchecked by law and fostered by shrewd men who turned it to their own advantage, it grew steadily, and the applications for office under the administrations succeeding Washington's show how it advanced *pari*

*passu* with the advance in intensity of party spirit. Originally confined to applications to fill existing vacancies, it naturally extended to requests for the removal of officials simply because of the political opinions they held or the political activity they displayed. But this phase of it, at least, was steadily resisted by the appointing power, until Andrew Jackson surrendered to it.

GAILLARD HUNT.